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THE LOST CHARM
AND
OTHER POEMS

BY FRANKLIN L. CLEVENGER



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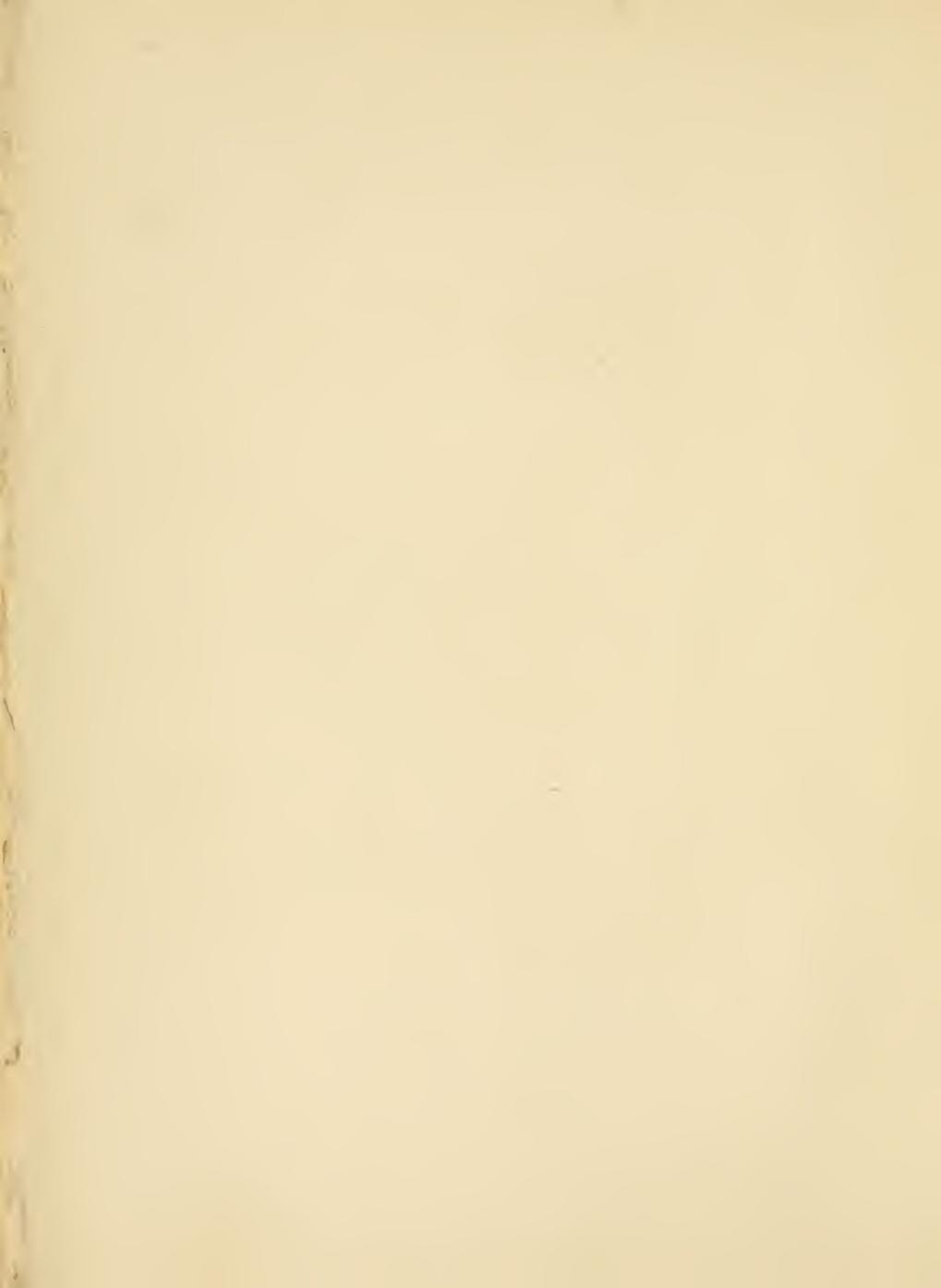
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TO
PROF. JOHN I. COCHRAN
WHO

*E'en while all within was gloom
From troubles sore, there still was room
Upon the surface for a smile
That vanquished gloomy thoughts the while.*

THE AUTHOR.

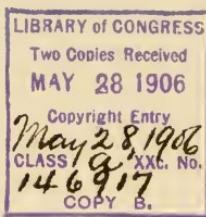


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COLUMBUS, INDIANA, M DCCCC VI



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THE LOST CHARM

Since I am still unmarried, no doubt you
wonder why

I speak of things that happened in days so
long gone by.

I know how natural it is to try to keep the
world

From knowing just how old we are, when
by three tens, we've whirled.

But don't you know, I take a pride in saying, "Forty years
I've trod this grand old earth of ours, and
shared its joys and tears."
So, if I speak of happenings of days in childhood's yore,
It means I'll have to call you back full thirty years or more.

So just turn back the thirty years to days
more dear to me
Than all the rest of life combined, for simply this you see:—
My father, mother, Jim and I, lived on a little farm—
Not very large but large enough—and then the childhood's charm

Of everything. In Summer and winter, we
had our work to do,
. We went about it cheerfully, we knew
when it was through
We'd have the smiles of mother and father's
cheery laugh
So charming all the evening, at our childish
little chaff.

We had to milk, and saw the wood, and
feed the horse and cow,
Call up the hogs and give them corn, and
bed the mother sow.
On rainy days we always worked in the
wagon-shed at home.
On Sunday, we had company—the neighbor
boys would come—

We coasted down the hillside, we tapped a
sugar tree,

We made a hickory whip, or a wild horse,
—that was me:

We never robbed a bird's nest, but the hor-
net's nest was ours—

There never one escaped us in the quiet
morning hours.

The branches of a cherry-tree extended o'er
the roof

Of our clapboard-covered woodhouse, and
this was surely proof

That in the month of June upon this roof
we'd be,

Or on the other hillside where grew a ser-
vice tree.

A little later in the fall, when frosts began
to come,
We went a paw-paw hunting, and seldom
would get home
Till the evening shadows darkened, and the
stars began to shine,
Each conscious that we'd meet again, the
next day just at nine.

Early Monday morning, we were up before
the sun;
And long before the school-bell rang, our
morning chores were done.
Our books were in the sachels, our hair was
parted straight,
And we were on the road to school, when
the clock was striking eight.

So bent were we on getting there in time
to have a play
Before the second bell would ring, we just
took time to say,
“Look, there’s a chipmonk on the fence;”
then hastened on until
We reached the goal so much desired, the
schoolhouse on the hill.

The dear old schoolhouse on the hill! If I
could only tell
The charms it always held for me,—the mu-
sic of its bell,
When on a frosty morning it rang out clear
and sweet!
Then loud as any country dance, the sound
of scraping feet

On the doorstep, the doorsill, and half way
up the aisle!

The school trustee declared one day, he
heard the noise a mile.

Then each one was assigned his seat and
then the rules were read—

The school term was begun; and now much
more should not be said.

Time makes a change in everything; but say,
it is a shame

That childhood's charm is lost so soon and
with us can't remain.

The thirty years I've spoken of has wrought
a change in me

That I would soon change back from if it
could only be.

Men look at me and say, "That man is
wealthy, wise and great."

Well, that may be, yet what is that? A
circumstance of fate.

From all the wealth and all the praise, I
say it to you still,

I'd part to be a child again at the school-
house on the hill.

CHILDHOOD'S CHARM

When the evening shadows lengthen, and
the sparkling dew is on,
And the moon and stars begin to show their
light,
My memory often travels back, to days that
now are gone,
My childhood days, when everything was
bright.

How it all comes back to me, just as if
'twas yesterday,

When we built our great big castles in
the air.

Can it be that they are wafted by the sands
of time away?

Yes; like childhood's charm they're scattered
everywhere.

What a pleasure to review them—The days
of childhood's yore;

But 'tis always followed closely by
regret,

That time has far removed us from its
charm forevermore.

We say forevermore, they've gone from us
and yet—

Who knows but that a haven far beyond
the reach of man,
The childhood's charm awaits its soul
to greet,
And we'll be again like children, who knows,
or who can tell,
Just like them, but with wisdom—and
complete.

We are sometimes made to wonder if the
nature of a child
Is a part of what he was before he
came
To earth to gain some wisdom, but by Satan
is beguiled
Into thinking sure that everything is
lame;

Then the charm, as tho' offended, flew back
to whence it came,
To remain until perhaps some happy
day,
With the soul will be united, when the soul
is free again,
From the blasting scars that made it fly
away.

WHEN MEMORY DESERTS ME

When memory deserts me, and I no longer
can recall

Events that happened long ago, I want no
mind at all.

For every occurrence that I've noticed here
of late

Seems but another link in the passing chain
of fate.

I do not take the interest, I did when I
was young;
For everything is changed, and I am not
among
The folks that things are doing for: so I
can only praise
The Lord for reminiscence of my life's
early days.

I'm old and blind and feeble, and as deaf
as any stone;
And as far as any comp'ny goes, am prac-
tically alone.
The people all about me are young, and
have full sway;
And it's righteous that they should, for I
have had my day.

You may look at me and wonder, as I
slowly nod my head,
And think my life is all a blank, that I
were better dead,
But my life is full of pleasure, for I fondly
still recall
When this old house was all but Heaven,
and I but lord of all.

I do not care for favors, I ask but little
care,—
A warm and cozy corner for my good old
hickory chair,
My snuff-box, tobacco and pipe in easy
reach;
Then other folks about the house, can dance
or they can preach.

No; I am never lonesome, their attention
but annoys,
And that is why they say that I believe
they still are boys;
The fact is, I am busy entertaining
friends
Of long ago, so dear to me, their welcome
never ends.

Well then you say, "Who are these friends?"
You see no one about;
It happens that they only come when all
of you are out.
And there are very many groups, that I can
call at will;
But there is always one of two, that lingers
fondly still,

When all the rest have gone on their
respective way;

One is my aged parents who died before
your day;

The other group, your mother and a merry
crowd of eight;—

And of the pranks they all go through, I will
not here relate,

For it would make you wonder that my
memory is so good

About what happened 'way back there, when
it is understood,

That things that happened yesterday, today
to me are blank,

And of the boys around the hearth, I can't
tell Jim from Frank.

I count it as a blessing that all this is the
case,

Since I am old, and of no use to any
round the place;

But, when memory deserts me, and I no
longer can recall

Events that happened long ago, I want no
mind at all.

A WELCOME VISITOR

"What'd you say your name is, stranger?
Right:—I know a Right, a ranger,
Out in California State
Not far from the golden gate.

Looks like you for all the world;
Blue eyes, hair is slightly curled,
'Bout the same as you in height,
And like you, his name is Right."

"Right's my name, I had a brother
Once, we looked like one another,
He's been gone nigh twenty years,
That he is dead, I have my fears."

"See that house—there on the hill,—
See that farm, and that old mill?
All of these belong to me;
If I only knew that he
Out near Golden Gate does live,
All of them I'd freely give."

Then he cast a wistful glance
At the visitor, by chance
Saw a roguish twinkle there,
Old, familiar;—"I declare,

"John, it's you! In heaven's name,
Am I dreaming; am I sane!"
"Neither, much I fear," said John.
"Keep your coat and linen on,
And invite me in to dinner,
For I'm hungry as a sinner."

AT HOME AGAIN

That little old weazen-faced woman there
Is my wife; she's the mother of all these here.
Her beauty has gone like the faded rose;
I speak of her face, for goodness knows,
Her soul is as sweet as her face once was fair

There was a time when for beauty and grace,
Her form was only excelled by her face.
'Twas the pride of my life in those young days,
For knowing but little of the world and its ways,
I thought that beauty held all things apace.

When business was good, and all went well,
I dressed her in silks as fine as they sell,
And this to her credit, I'm glad to relate,
She never was proud, though dressed up-to-date,
And always was just the same loving Nell.

As time rolled on, times changed as times do,
And we found that we'd have to start life anew.
I could not buy silks: when I told her so,
She said she had always preferred calico.
Then said I, I've a wife that is one of a few.

And my dear, we will have to give up this chateau,
Discharge all our help but the children and
you.

"Just the thing," said my wife, "I have always
desired;
We surely don't need any help that is hired,
While we have four children with nothing
to do."

"As to keeping this house, It were all very fine
To keep up appearance, when we were in line;
But with all of its grandeur, it to me is not
home,
Like the dear little cottage we lived in so long,
I could just keep it up and make everything
shine."

Well, we're home again, and in looking around,
I find that a pleasanter home is not found
With its old-fashioned fireplace and coziest
nooks,
That can not be rivalled by stories in books,
Tho' a modest home on an acre of ground.

MY CARCASSONNE

As the peasant yearned for Carcassonne,
I yearn for Colorado!
To think the goal is never won,
It makes me feel so bad, O
I scarce can see for blinding tears
That flow so freely with my fears
That I shall live yet many years,
Before I see a shadow
Of Pikes Peak's summit capped with snow,
And far beyond where many go
To see the canyon, dark as woe,
With nature sculptured dado.

I want to breathe that famous air
So light and mirth inspiring,
And drink from springs of water rare,
See all my friends inquiring;
And Denver with her hundred schools
That turn out congressmen and fools;
The livery-stable-man that rolls
In wealth that comes from hiring
Wild bronchos to the eastern swells
Accompanied by most charming belles,
Who ride through mountain-glades and dells
And swamps—all without tiring.

MY SWEETHEART DOWN THE WAY

I have a sweetheart down the way:
I think of her both night and day.
These thoughts a charm do lend to me,
 That makes my life worth livin'.
One thing, however, bothers me
Another feller tries to see
If he can be one of us three,
 And no invites I'm givin'.

To see how this dod-draughted cuss
Would try to put an end to us,
And try to make an ugly muss,

Most throws me in a fever.
If she should even speak to him,
Her chances'ud be pretty slim;
For sure as my name's Ugly Jim,
I'd go away and leav'er.

I don't believe in leavin' home,
Because a darker day has come,
Nor go where they are sellin' rum,

And drink a little bit there;
But there is not a single doubt,
If that galoot should cut me out,
I'd go to Eelinois 'bout

As soon as I could git there.

OUR FIRST MEETING

There was a time when life seemed dear to me,
'Twas when I had you ever by my side.
How fondly then I ever hoped to see
The day that I should claim you as my bride.

Dost mind the day when first we met, my dear,
How young and gay were we, and free from
care?
Your merry voice, I ever seem to hear,
As 'Twas that April morning over there.

The last day of your school it was, and mine
Received invites to come and take a side
In spelling-match and have a dinner fine.
To which our teacher boastfully replied,

"Your invitation kindly we accept, and look
Well to your job," he said, "and make a
good review,
And study well McGuffey's spelling book.
And Webster's Dictionary too."

At length the time arrived, and on each side
Like warriors bold, arrayed were we,
And not more sure of winning for his side,
Was warrior old and tried, than you and me.

"Best spellers to the foot," then was the rule.
And thus I knew when we stood face to face
That you the best were in your school,
You knew full well that I held mine a-pace.

The teacher, easy words at first pronounced.

To give each little child a chance to spell,
But after all the little tots were "bounced,"

He then turned over many pages. Well
It soon was up to you and me to start;
McGuffey's book was laid upon the shelf;
They knew we knew McGuffey's all by heart,
So Webster's was installed with greater
wealth.

That threw us both on very doubtful ground;

We knew full well our time was coming next.
You did quite well until the seventh round,
Then seemed uncertain and perplexed.

You tried, you failed. The teacher answered,
"Next."

I knew the word. You knew what made me
frown,
And scratch my head, and stammer, and look
vexed,
Because I could not bear to turn you down.

The time had passed when I could let you win,
As I had most made up my mind to try;
But I could simply put an extra letter in,
And thereby let you make a tie.

No other introduction needed we:
And thus it happened, after school was out,
You crossed the aisle and came forthwith to
me,—
Your smiling face put bashfulness to rout.

I ever fondly, still recall that blissful hour,
And ever wish that many such were mine,
For love's young dream is bliss, is power
The strongest, from the hand of love di-
vine.

EVERY CLOUD IS LINED WITH GOLD

"Every cloud is lined with gold,"
By truthful sages we are told.
Though dark and gloomy everywhere,
The gold is there! The gold is there!
It may not be our lot to see
The gold as pure as gold can be,
Because we look with unclean eyes,
We see but trouble in the skies.

Because the gold we cannot see,
We must not think that little we
Are wiser much than sages are,
Because we do not see as far.
When we can see as well as they,
The gold will show as plain as day,
And gleam and sparkle on our way;
Then we can say as well as they:
“Every cloud is lined with gold,
And every path is strewn flowers.”
Tho’ trouble like an ocean rolled,
We smile and say, the world ours.
And when we find a friend in need,
It will not hurt our human greed
To bid him all his tears withhold,
For “Every cloud is lined with gold.”

PLEA FOR RECONCILIATION

I cannot think, my love, that you are gone;
I only know your face I cannot see
As once I did, with heaven's sunbeams on,
Yet, ever feel that you are near to me.

If you are near, my love, pray make it known;
Some little sign or token give, my dear,
That I may know your love is mine alone,
And I may only know that you are here.

Think not my careless words were aught
But just a little temper ill concealed.
An avalanche of sorrow they have brought,
Give but the word, and they will be re-pealed.

Think, Love, the spring will soon be here,
The warbling of the birds, you now can hear
While strolling by the meadow brook so clear.
It takes your love to set them off, my dear.

When I returned to haunt the sacred spot,
My love, where you so recently had been,
'Twas prosy there, because I found you not,
E'en grass-blades seemed to be less green.

The song-birds twittered gaily still,
And gaily flew about from tree to tree,
The crystal water rippling down the hill,
All seemed intent on slyly mocking me.

My weary steps, I slowly then retraced
Toward the village tavern door,
Which, when I entered, seemed to be disgraced
And surely less inviting than before.

And thus from place to place, I sadly roam,
Ne'er finding but a shadow of content.
At eve, when I review events at home,
Find but another weary day is spent.

I feel that thus 'twould be for life,
Were I to live it all without your love!
So let us end this ever-lasting strife,
That gladness may return like Noah's dove.

ABOUT EVIL HABITS

Haul in, young man, you are going too near
The rapids; and you are in danger, I fear,
For men much older and stronger than you
Are naught in their pow'r more than bubbles
of dew.

Don't risk your young life in the monster's
grim claws

Just to show to your friends, you are fearless
of laws

That nature has, that are known to have
strength

To carry you down to your ruin, at length.
You are still sound in body your character, true;
Think not that these things are not precious to
you;

Guard them well, venture less. In the future
you'll find

That too forward in youth will mean later
behind.

If you don't be careful, you'll find that it takes
The most of a life to correct the mistakes.

IF YOU WANT TO LIVE LONG

If you want to live long and never grow weary,

Be always contented, good natured and cheery;

Eat but a light diet, sleep soundly at night,

Crawl out in the morning with the first streak of light.

Don't stay in the house, get out in the air;

Your toilet perform with the greatest of care,

And keep yourself clean from your teeth to your nails;—

Such treatment as this, to keep health never fails.

Don't go to the war, for that is too risky;

Don't fall in love with a girl, who's too frisky;

Don't hurry the cattle, keep away from a mule,—

Or keep to his front, is a very good rule.

Stay home with your friends, don't travel about,

There's danger in travel by any old route.

Don't blow out the gas, don't play with the fire,

Don't try to handle a live 'lectric wire.

By the strictest of rules that opposes the devil,

We shun the very appearance of evil.

That covers most of the dangers we meet,

If we chance to have business down on the street.

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If to all of these "don'ts," we pay strict
attention,
And meet with no accidents worthy of men-
tion,
If lucky enough to keep rid of dis-
ease,
We can live to be just as old as we
please.

LIFE IS MADE UP OF MISTAKES

If life is mostly made up of mistakes,—
Which it is,
And the world is chock full of all kinds of
fakes,—which it is,
It stands us in hand to use both of our
eyes,
To follow the way of the truthful and wise,
If we make the most of our time as it flies
As it does.

Do you know at ten, you are one sixth done?

Well, you are;

At thirty, one half of your race is run,

And by far

The best of your life has flitted away;

Have you put your time in in dancing and
play?

Or while the sun shone, have you harvested
hay every hour?

Would you leave some work that will do
. some good, when you're gone,

Work the oars with a stroke that will stem
the flood, and ply on;

If you do your part well, you have no time
to lose;

Take hold of a chance e'en while it ac-
crues;

Know what the right is, and the right way
choose; and fly on.

LIFE IS WHAT WE MAKE IT

Is life just what we make of it?
And does each mortal make
The circumstances that surround,
Temptations strong that take
The people up and hurl them down
To depths of grief and shame—
Or make them scale the mountains high
To greatness and to fame?

Yes: life is what we make of it;
Temptations will not swerve
The man who dares to do the right
With all his will and nerve.
Because some weaklings do go down,
That's no excuse for you.
You've seen their fall; you know the pit;—
You should know what to do.

CHANGING ATOMS

We see it in the rising sun,
We see it in the twilight,
We see it in the stars and moon,
That light our way by night,
We see it in the budding rose,
The lily in the dell,
And all the birds with songs of glee
Do of his goodness tell.

There's not a single thing he's made,
 But what does witness bear
That he is God Almighty,
 And present everywhere.
His laws are constantly at work,
 Nor leaves one thing the same
Today as it was yesterday:
 Perfection is his aim.

The stately oak, more stately still
 Or a little more decayed;
The blade of grass is longer
 Or differently arrayed;
The river is a little higher
 Or lower still perchance;
And we, like all his other work,
 Go backward or advance.

NEW YEAR REFLECTIONS

Many guests are in the parlor,
And the sitting-room is full;—
Full of laughing merry faces,
There to have a taffy-pull.
And the cooks are in the kitchen;
Making cookies, pies, and cakes,
And a lot of rusty doughnuts
Good as anyone can make!

When you see this jolly party,
 You would surely never guess,
'Twas assembled there to witness
 Death in all its awfulness.
But 't is true; and I am minded
 All their mirth to criticise,
For I think it would be better
 To reflect and summarize.

What if 't is the year that's dying
 Should there not be some regret,
If while passing we have prospered,
 That it has to leave us yet?
If the year has been a failure,
 And we cannot point to good,
Should we not be very sorry
 That it's gone? I think we should.

There is yet one hour remaining,
It is now Eleventh hour;
Just the time for noble purpose;
Get to work with all your power.
You can make the last remaining,
Count for much you've let pass by,
By from merriment refraining,
For the time is precious. Why?

Look and ponder on your doings
Of the year that's past and gone.
Noting closely every action,
That could be improved upon.
After this you've done completely,
You have yet a half an hour;
Make a lasting resolution
That you'll try with all your power.

Then do not forget the climax,
Ask the aid of power divine
To sustain you in your efforts
And to keep you straight in line
Through the new year that is coming.

Then at twelve o'clock the chimes
Sound to you a great deal sweeter,
Than they do at other times.

Then the chimes mean something to you,
For they start you out anew
With a Friend who never falters,
And is always good and true;
And you have a full assurance
That the year that's coming in
Won't be lost, but every moment
You are sure some good to win.

FATHER'S HOME

Forty years ago today—
That same red sun sank far away
Behind yon hill, the same as now;
Ah! I can well remember how
It seemed to be all lined with gold;
I also mind how father told
How this sunset would be his last,
And how ere dawn his spirit passed
From time and earthly home away;—
Just forty years ago today.

And forty years ago tomorrow
Our home was dark with grief and sorrow.

Never once in all these years
Have I a sunset seen, but bears
My mem'ry on that fateful night
That gave our happy home a blight,
Which time on earth could not efface;
But when great clouds fill up yon space,
And far beyond them sinks the sun,
The transformation is begun,
And cities lined with gold will show
The same as forty years ago.

Then I behold a city fair
And think my father's home is there.





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